

Child Care Providers' Frequently Asked Questions

I've heard that there are federal funds available to assist child care providers. Can you tell me more about these funds?

The Child Care Bureau (CCB) is responsible for the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which provides federal funds to states, territories, and tribes to increase the affordability, availability and quality of child care services. This includes subsidies to eligible parents for child care services and, at the option of your state, grants or loans to child care providers. Subsidies are by law limited to cases where eligible parents are working or in school, or where children need protective services.

Each state, tribe and territory establishes its own guidelines for how these funds are used, as well as the procedures and timeframes for applying. In all cases, however, a substantial part of the CCDF funds must be used to provide child care assistance for families who meet income-eligibility guidelines. A major goal of the program is to help ensure that the child care needs of working parents are met.

Where can I find other funding for my child care program?

If you are a not-for-profit program or you have the opportunity to team up with a not-for-profit organization, you can apply for grants under two programs: the "Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals" program, and the "Urban and Rural Community Economic Development" program. These programs are administered by the federal Administration on Families and Children's (ACF's) Office of Community Services (OCS) and are designed to support job creation for low-income individuals. The programs' grants may be used to support the creation and/or expansion of child care facilities, as well as to fund the salaries of child care providers. For details, consult the OCS web site at: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ocs/kits1.htm>.

Additional information on fundraising, grants, and financing strategies is available at: <http://nccic.org/cctopics/funding.html>.

Are there special programs to assist programs in rural areas?

The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development programs offer loans to develop community facilities, which may include child care centers. Public entities (such as counties and cities) and non-profit organizations (under certain conditions) may be eligible for the loans. For details, consult USDA's web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html>

Are local funds available to assist my program or my families?

There are a number of potential funding sources to consider in your own community.

- Community service organizations, such as Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Junior League or college fraternities and sororities, may be willing donate funds to community projects, including child care projects. Check your local telephone yellow pages under "clubs" for these and other service organizations in your area. Also, you may want to look into opportunities available through the United Way in your locality.
- County or city governments may have special funding initiatives for child care, as may local early-childhood professional organizations or child care resource-and-referral agencies.
- If your program serves families from a core group of employers in your community, you may consider seeking assistance from these companies and any professional organizations associated with them. In addition to monetary resources, you may wish to investigate their willingness to make "in-kind" contributions. Volunteer services, goods, materials, or equipment may be offered to assist program development or operation.
- The local Yellow Pages may list "Fundraising Counselors and Organizations" that can provide further technical assistance in your search for child care funding. In several localities, special loan programs are being developed to help child care programs access immediate funds at affordable rates.

How can I find out about my state's child care program?

On the web site of the CCB's National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) are State Profiles (<http://nccic.org/statepro.html>), which give a summary of key information about child care in each state. In each profile you will find contact information for:

- The state's child care licensing agency — This agency can give you details about your state's requirements for caring for children, including procedures for becoming registered or licensed. (You may also wish to visit the web site of the National Resource Center on Health and Safety in Child Care at <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>, which lists the regulations for each state and provides national guidelines for the development of child care standards. This center is

sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the US Department of Health and Human Services.)

- The state agency responsible for subsidizing child care programs — This office can tell you if funds are available to help you start a new child care program or expand your existing program, and they will let you know how to apply. This agency is found under the "Child Care Subsidy Agency" heading in the NCCIC State Profile. The agency can also tell you how the families you will be serving would apply to receive subsidies to help them pay for child care.
- The state office for USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) — This office can provide subsidies for meals and snacks for children enrolled in child care programs. You can also obtain information on this subject by consulting the following web site:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/statedirectory.htm>

Is there a program in my area that can assist in starting a child care program or that gives technical assistance to child care providers?

Your state's child care licensing agency can give you details about your state's requirements for caring for children, including procedures for becoming registered or licensed. They also may offer technical-assistance services to child care providers. The State Profiles on NCCIC's web site (<http://nccic.org/statepro.html>) provide a summary of key information about child care licensing regulations and program contacts in each state.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) can be helpful in establishing a child care business. You can learn how to contact your local SBA representatives by calling the "SBA Answer Desk" at 1-800-827-5722, or consult SBA's internet site at <http://www.sba.gov> and click on the "Local SBA Resources" button.

Additionally, there are several national organizations that offer free or low-cost materials to assist in the start up of a center-based or family-home child care operation. For more information about these organizations, visit NCCIC's links page at: <http://nccic.org/links.html>.

There may also be a local child care resource-and-referral (CCR&R) agency available to you. Local CCR&Rs provide information on child care in local communities and on financial assistance and funding opportunities. They may also provide information on provider support organizations, training organizations and opportunities, marketing practices, business practices, and more. You can find out more about your local CCR&R by contacting Child Care Aware:

Toll-free: 1-800-424-2246

Web: <http://www.naccrra.net/>

How can my child care program work with Head Start and/or Department of Education preschool programs?

Partnerships between child care, Head Start, and other early education programs can offer excellent opportunities to:

- Provide full-day, full-year child care to families so parents can work or pursue education and training opportunities;
- Make comprehensive services more widely available; and
- Improve the continuity of services and the quality of programs by making optimal use of available resources.

The Head Start Bureau and the Child Care Bureau are committed to supporting partnerships at the local, state, tribal, territorial, regional, and national levels as referenced in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (January 1998); the Program Instruction on Funding Guidance for FY 1999 Head Start Expansion (March 1999); and the Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule (July 1998). For further information on these documents, visit Head Start's Legislation/Regulations/Policies page at <http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/regs/index.htm>.

You can contact QUILT ("Quality in Linking Together") at their toll-free number, 1-877-867-8458, for more information on such collaborations. Their web site is <http://www.quilt.org/Home/home.html>.

Where can I learn about federal resources for school-age care?

In September of 1999, Vice President Gore announced the new federal Afterschool.gov {<http://www.afterschool.gov>} web site, which describes over 100 federal programs that support after-school programs. This site also has pages for children and teens, linking them to sites they might find interesting.

The families I serve need health insurance. Is there a program that can help them?

You may wish to inform the families you serve, or will be serving, that the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) can assist them with medical needs. Working families can apply for assistance under a revised Medicaid program that is independent of the TANF (or welfare) program. Further information about the SCHIP program may be obtained at <http://www.hcfa.gov/init/children.htm>, or call toll-free: 1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669).

My families need assistance with housing. How can I help them?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsors the “Community Development Block Grant,” which provides funds to entities such as city and county governments for the development of child care centers for low- and moderate-income families. To inquire about the status of these funds, contact your mayor’s or county manager’s office. You can obtain your specific local contact from HUD’s national web site: <http://www.hud.gov/local.html>. Or call the HUD national office at: (202) 401-0388, (202) 708-1455 (TTY).

How do I report suspected child abuse?

Check the following web site for the appropriate phone number in your area:
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/rpt_abu.htm